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Richard Nugent, Editor] THE WHOLE ART OF GOVERNMENT CONSISTS IN THE ART OF BEING HONEST.—Jefferson. [and Publisher

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Wyoming Sketches.

(CONTINUED.)

"Now set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide;
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height!"——
——"O, war thou son of hell!
Whom angry heavens do make their minister."

The dark and threatening sayings of a drunken squaw, who with a small party of Indians had been straying around the settlements, had awakened some suspicions that an attack was meditated by the enemy in the course of the season, and a message had been sent to head quarters of the continental army, early in June, praying for a detachment of troops for their protection. To this request no answer had been received. To fly, however, with their women and children, with an agile enemy upon their very heels, was impossible, even had the thought been entertained. But it was not. The men of Wyoming, and the boys likewise, were brave, and they had strong confidence that they should be able to repel the invader. No sooner was his presence known, therefore, than the militia rapidly assembled at a defence called "Fort Forty," from the circumstance that forty of the settlers had originally joined their efforts in its erection, situated immediately on the west bank of the river, some three miles north of Fort Wyoming. Small garrisons of aged men were left in the other feeble forts of the colonists, for the protection of the women and children assembled therein, while the major part of those capable of bearing arms, old men and boys, fathers, grand fathers and grand-sons, assembled at fort Forty to the number of nearly four hundred.

Colonel Zebulon Butler, heretofore mentioned as a soldier in the French war, and as being placed in the commission of the peace, was now an officer in the continental army, and happening to be at home at the time of the invasion, on the invitation of the people he accepted the command. A council of war was called on the morning of the 3rd, to determine upon the expediency of marching out, and giving the enemy battle, or of awaiting his advance. There were some who preferred delay, in the hope that a reinforcement would arrive from the camp of General Washington. Others maintained that as no advices had been received from thence in reply to their application, the messenger had probably been cut off; and as the enemy's force was constantly increasing, they thought it best to meet and repel him at once if possible. The debates were warm; and before they were ended, five commissioned officers, who, hearing of the anticipated invasion, had obtained permission to return for the defence of their families, joined them. Their arrival extinguished the hope of present succor, and the result of the council was a determination for an immediate attack.

As soon as the proper dispositions could be made, Colonel Zebulon Butler placed himself at the head of the undisciplined force, and led them forward, the design being to take the enemy by surprise. And such would probably have been the issue but for the occurrence of one of those untoward incidents against which human wisdom cannot guard. A scout, having been sent forward to reconnoitre, found the enemy at dinner, not anticipating an attack, and in high and frolicsome glee. But on its return to report the fact the scout was fired upon by a straggling Indian, which gave the alarm. The consequence was, that on the approach of the Americans, they found the enemy in line, ready for their reception.—Colonel Z. Butler commanded the right of the Americans, aided by Major Garratt. The left was commanded by Colonel Dennison, of the Wyoming militia, assisted by Lieut. Colonel Dorrance. Opposed to the right of the Americans and also resting upon the bank of the river, was Col. John Butler, with his rangers. The right of the enemy, resting upon, or rather extending into a marsh, was composed principally of Indians and tories, led by a celebrated Seneca chief named *Gi-en-gwah-toh;* or, *He-who-goes-in-the-Smoke.* The field of battle was a plain, partly improved and partly covered with scrub oaks and yellow pine.

The action began soon after four o'clock in the afternoon, and was for a time kept up on both sides with great spirit. The right of the Americans advanced bravely as they fired, and the best troops of the enemy were compelled to give back. But while the advantages were thus with the Americans on the right, far different was the case on the left.—Penetrating the thicket of the swamp, a heavy body of the Indians were enabled, unperceived, to outflank Colonel Dennison, and suddenly like a dark cloud to fall upon his rear. The Americans, thus standing between two fires, fell fast before the rifles of the Indians and tories, but yet they faltered not, until an order from Colonel Dennison to "fall back," for the purpose only of changing position, was mistaken for an order to retreat. The misconception was fatal. The confusion instantly became so great that restoration to order was impossible. The enemy, not more brave, but better skilled in the horrid trade of savage war, and far more numerous withal, sprang forward, and as they made the air resound with their frightful yells, rushed upon the Americans, hand to hand, tomahawk and spear. But the handful of regulars, and those who were not at first thrown into confusion, did all they could do to retrieve the fortunes of the day. Observing one of his men to yield a little ground, Colonel Dorrance called to him, with the utmost coolness—"Stand up to your work, sir!" The colonel immediately fell. As the enemy obtained the rear, an officer notified Captain Hewett of the fact, and inquired, "Shall we retreat, sir?" "I'll be d—d if I do," was his reply—and he fell instantly dead at the head of his little command. The retreat now became a flight, attended with horrible carnage. "We are nearly alone," said an officer named Westbrook—"shall we go?" "I'll have one more shot," said a Mr. Cooper, in reply. At the same instant a savage sprang toward him with his spear, but was brought to the ground in his leap, and Cooper deliberately re-loaded his piece before he moved. On the first discovery of the confusion on the left, Colonel Zebulon Butler rode into the thickest of the melee, exclaiming—"Don't leave me, my children! The victory will yet be ours." But numbers and discipline, and the Indians to boot, were against the Americans, and their rout was complete.

During the flight to Fort Forty, the scene was that of horrible slaughter. Nor did the darkness put an end to the work of death. No assault was made upon the fort that night; but many of the prisoners taken were put to death by torture. The place of these murders was about two miles North of Fort Forty, upon a rock, around which the Indians formed themselves in a circle. The prisoners were placed upon the rock, and the squaws struck their heads open with the tomahawk. It has been said, both in tradition and in print, that the priestess of this bloody sacrifice was the celebrated Catharine Montour, sometimes called Queen Esther, whose residence was at Catharinestown, at the head of Seneca Lake. But we cannot believe the tale. Catharine Montour was a half-breed, who had been well educated in Canada. Her reputed father was one of the French governors, probably Count Frontignac, and she herself was a lady of comparative refinement. She was much caressed in Philadelphia, and mingled in the best society. Hence we have not the remotest belief that she was the Hecate of that fell night.—A night indeed of terror;—for

——"Sounds that mingled laugh, and shout, and scream
To freeze the blood in one discordant jar,
Rung the pealing thunderbolts of war.
Whoop after whoop with rack the ear assailed,
As if unearthly fiends had burst their bar;
While rapidly the marksman's shot prevailed;—
And aye, as if for death, some lonely trumpet wailed!"

When the numbers are taken into the account, the slaughter on this occasion was dreadful. The five officers who arrived from the continental army on the morning of the battle were all slain. Captain Hewett, who fell, had a son in the battle with him, aged eighteen. Captain Aholiah Buck, and his son, aged only fourteen, were both slain. Anderson Dana, the representative of the valley in the Connecticut legislature, had returned from the session just in season to fight and fall. His son-in-law, Stephen Whiting, who had been married to his daughter but a few months before, went into the battle with him, and was also slain. There was a large family named Gore, one of whom was with the continental army. Those at home, five brothers and two brothers-in-law, went into the battle, and of these, five were dead upon the field at night, a sixth was wounded, and one only escaped unhurt. Of the family of Mr. Weeks, seven went into the battle, viz: five sons and sons-in-law, and two inmates. Not one of the number escaped. These are but a few instances of many, which we have selected for the purpose of showing how general was the rush to the field, and how direful the carnage.

Our friend Charles Miner has thus eloquently described the closing scene of that day, as toward nightfall the fugitives came flying for shelter to the little forts. "The ravenous vulture was seen wheeling aloft, ready to pounce on the nest of the peaceful dove. The war-whoop and the scalp-yell of the savage Mohawk resounded through the valley. These were fiends who rip up, with merciless cruelty, the teeming mother,—who strike the grey haired father to the earth, and dash out the infant's brains on the doorpost. This was the terrible enemy that came down upon us, in overwhelming numbers. The battle was lost. Naked, panting and bloody—a few who had escaped came rushing into Wilkesbarre fort, where, trembling with anxiety, the women and children were gathered, waiting the dread issue. The appalling—"*All is lost*" proclaimed their utter destitution. They fly to the mountains—evening is approaching—the dreary swamp and shades of death before them,—the victorious Hell-hounds are opening on their track.

"Behold that aged sire, climbing the hill, a little boy clinging to his side. See that mother following his uncertain steps, an infant on her bosom and leading a little girl by the hand; they have neither bread nor shelter. She looks back on the valley—all around the flames of desolation are kindling; she casts her eye in the range of the battle field; numerous fires speak their own horrid purpose. She listens! The exulting yell of the savage strikes her ear! Again—a shriek of agonising woe! Who is the sufferer! It is her husband! the father of her children!!"

"O God who art the widow's friend
Be thou her comforter."

The fair fields of Wyoming presented a melancholy spectacle on the morning of the 4th. The pursuit of the Indians had ceased the preceding evening with the nightfall, and the work of death was completed by the tragedy at the Bloody Rock. But the sun arose upon the carcasses of the dead—not only dead but horribly mangled—strewn over the plain from the point where the battle began to Fort Forty. A few stragglers had at first taken refuge in that defence, but they did not retain it long; and by the morning light, all who had not been slain, or who had not betaken themselves to the mountains, had collected at Fort Wyoming, before which Colonel John Butler with his motley forces appeared at an early hour, and demanded a surrender. It appears that some negotiations upon the subject of a capitulation had been interchanged the preceding evening, but what point is uncertain—probably at fort Forty. Be that as it may, it was understood that no terms would be listened to by the enemy but that of the unconditional surrender of Colonel Zebulon Butler, and the small handful of regular troops, numbering only fifteen, who had escaped the battle, to the tender mercies of the Indians. Under these circumstances, means of escape for the Colonel and those fifteen men were found during the night. The former succeeded in making his way to one of the Moravian settlements on the Lehigh, and the latter fled to Shamokin.

The little fort being now surrounded by a cloud of Indians and tories, and having no means of defence, Colonel Dennison, now in command, yielded to the force of circumstances, and the importunities of the women and children, and entered into articles of capitulation. By these it was mutually agreed that the inhabitants of the settlement should lay down their arms, the fort be demolished, and the continental stores be delivered up. The inhabitants of the settlement were to be permitted to occupy their farms peaceably, and without molestation of their persons. The loyalists of the settlement were to be permitted to remain in the peaceable possession of their farms, and to trade without interruption. Colonel Dennison and the inhabitants stipulated not again to take up arms during the contest, and Colonel John Butler agreed to use his utmost influence to cause the private property of the inhabitants to be respected.

But the last-mentioned stipulation was entirely unheeded by the Indians, who were not, and perhaps could not be, restrained from the work of rapine and plunder. The surrender had no sooner taken place than they spread through the valley. Every house not belonging to a loyalist was plundered, and then laid in ashes. The greater part of the inhabitants, not engaged in the battle, men, women, and children, had fled to the mountains toward the Delaware; and as the work of destruction was re-commenced, many others followed the example. The village of Wilkesbarre consisted of twenty-three houses. It was burnt, and the entire population fled. No lives were taken by the Indians after the surrender; but numbers of women and children perished in the dismal swamp on the Pocono range of mountains, and some of those who remained to harvest the fields, were killed in subsequent incursions of the Indians. The whole number of people killed and missing was about three hundred.

Until the publication, last year, of the Life of Brant, by the writer of the present sketches, it had been asserted in all history, that that celebrated Mohawk chieftain was the Indian leader at Wyoming. He himself always denied any participation in this bloody expedition, and his assertions were always corroborated by the British officers, when questioned upon the subject. But these denials, not appearing in history, relieved him not from the odium; and the "monster Brant" has been denounced, the world over, as the author of the massacre. In the work referred to above, the author took upon himself the vindication of the savage warrior from the accusation, and, as he thought at the time, with success.—A reviewer of that work, however, in the Democratic Magazine, who is understood to be the Hon. Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, disputed the point, maintaining that the vindication was not satisfactory. The author thereupon made a journey into the Seneca country, and pushed the investigation among the surviving chiefs and warriors of the Senecas engaged in that campaign. The result was a triumphant acquittal of Brant from all participation therein. The celebrated chief Captain Pollard, whose Indian name is *Kaoundoowand*, a fine old warrior, was a young chief in that battle. He gave us a full account of it, and was clear and positive in his declarations that Brant and the Mohawks were not engaged in that campainn at all. Their leader, he assured us, was *Gi-en-gwah-toh*, as mentioned in a preceding column of these sketches, who lived many years afterward, and was succeeded in his chieftaincy by the late *Young King*.—That point of history, therefore, may be considered as conclusively settled.

But after all, the greatest barbarities of this celebrated massacre were committed by the tories. Many loyalists, as we have already seen, had months before united themselves with the enemy at Niagara; and on his arrival at the head of the valley, many more of the settlers joined his ranks. These all fought with the most brutal ferocity against their former neighbors, and were guilty of acts of which even this distant contemplation curdles the blood. Of these acts a single one must suffice. During the bloody fight of the 3rd, some of the fugitives plunged into the river and escaped to the opposite shore. A few landed upon Mohocko-nock Island, having lost their arms in the flight, and were pursued thither.—One of them was discovered by his own brother, who had espoused the side of the crown. The unarmed Whig fell upon his knees before his brother and offered to serve him as a slave forever, if he would but spare his life. But the fiend in human form was inexorable; he muttered, "*you are a d—d tory,*" and shot him dead. This tale is so horrible, that until the present visit to Wyoming we had been compelled to doubt it. But a survivor of the battle, a Mr. Baldwin, has confirmed its truth with his own lips. He informed us that he knew the brothers well, and that the fact was so. We visited the bank of the river opposite the fatal spot, and could almost fancy ourselves spectators of the harrowing scene

The fugitives generally crossed the mountains to Stroudsburg, where there was a small military post. Many of them continued their journey back to Connecticut, ascending the Delaware and crossing over to the Hudson at Poughkeepsie. It was at this place that the first account of the massacre was published. It was collected from the lips of the panic-stricken and suffering fugitives, and was full of enormous exaggerations, such as the alleged massacre of women and children, the burning of forts full of people, &c. None of these tales were true, albeit they found their way into Dr. Thatcher's Military Journal. A venerable old lady whom we visited, Mrs. Bidlack, and of whom we shall have occasion to speak again, was one of the captives surrounded at the fort, being then about sixteen years old. She informed us that the Indians were kind to them after they were taken, except that they plundered them of every thing but the clothes upon their backs. They marked them with paint to prevent them from being killed by other Indians.

The fields of Wyoming were waving with heavy burdens of grain, ripening for the harvest, at the time of the invasion, and no sooner had the enemy retired than considerable numbers of the settlers returned to secure their crops. A detachment of regular troops, under Captain Spaulding, arrived soon after the battle, and a small fort was erected—at which post he remained more than two years—during which time many of the settlers came back and rebuilt their houses, and resumed their stations in the settlement.

There was, however, but little repose for the settlement until the close of the war. The Indians were frequently hovering upon the outskirts, by straggling scouts, and in larger parties, in quest of scalps, prisoners, and plunder. Sometimes they appeared in considerable numbers. In the month of March, 1779, Captain Spaulding's fort was surrounded by about two hundred and fifty Indians and painted tories. They commenced an attack upon the fort, but fled on the discharge of a field piece—destroying such property as came in their way. The strength of the garrison was too small to allow of pursuit.

In the summer of 1779, Wyoming was for a time the head quarters of General Sullivan, when assembling his troops for the celebrated expedition of that year through the Genesee country. After he had moved forward in that campaign a brisk action was fought between a detachment of Pennsylvania militia, moving to the north for the protection of the Lackawaxen settlements, and a party of one hundred and fifty Indians, in which the former were defeated, with the loss of between forty and fifty men killed and taken. Indeed there were many severe skirmishes, especially between the Wyoming people and the Indians—several heroic risings of Indians upon their captors—and many hair-breadth escapes between this period and the close of the war, the details of which are reserved for another occasion.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHURCH MUSIC.—Some mischievous wag having greased the spectacles of a clerk of a church, the latter, on attempting to give out the hymn, imagining that his eye sight was failing, exclaimed with his usual twang—

"My eyes are blind, I cannot see."

The people, imagining this was a part of the hymn, began immediately to sing it; whereupon the clerk, wishing to correct them, continued—

"I cannot see at all."

Which being also sung, he drawled out with somewhat less monotony—

"Indeed, my eyes are very blind,"

This being sung too, the clerk, out of patience, exclaimed—

"The Devil's in you all."

As this appeared to rhyme very well, the singers finished the stanza:

"My eyes are blind, I cannot see,
I cannot see at all;
Indeed my eyes are very blind,
The Devil's in you all."